DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 254 255 IR 051 058

AUTHOR	Turner, Bonnie L., Comp.; Downs, Rondi, Comp.
TITLE	Patron Relations: A Survival Manual.
INSTITUTION	Yakima Valley Regional Library, WA.
PUB DATE	Dec 83
NOTE	40p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Reference Materials - General (130)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Guidelines; Library Materials; *Library Personnel; *Library Planning; Library Role; Methods; Policy Formation; Problems; *Problem Solving; Reference Materials; *Regional Libraries
IDENTIFIERS	*Emergencies; Legal Rights; Library Procedures; *Library Users; Yakima Valley

ABSTRACT

Recognizing the responsibility of library staff members of maintain a pleasant environment for the public in the library, this manual discusses the library user's and library employee's rights under the law and how to protect them. It is arranged alphabetically by the type of problem or emergency that may be encountered. The procedure for handling a difficult situation follows a definition of the situation. While some of the procedures in this manual are already implemented in various departments, they have been compiled as a reference tool for other staff members. Two detailed sections, one on complaints, accidents, and emergencies, and the other on problem behavior, follow an introduction and a page of useful telephone numbers for public and social services, and hospitals in the area. Included in the complaints, accidents, and emergencies section are: questions about circulation, library materials, selection, and policies; fire in the library; injury or sudden illness of patron or staff member; and power failures. The section on problem behavior includes a variety of possible problem patrons (angry or irate patrons, chatty patrons, disruptive children or adults, drugs, alcohol, mentally disturbed patrons, solicitors, sleeping patrons, and sexual deviants) and problem situations (annoying telephone calls, theft of library materials or property, triggered book detection system, verbal abuse of staff, and weapons). A list of possible legal consequences for various offenses, several sample forms, and a list of helpful hints are appended. (THC)

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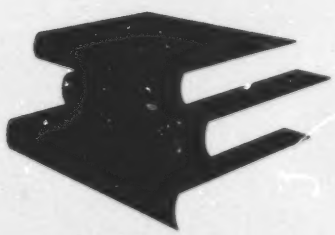
PATRON RELATIONS: A SURVIVAL MANUAL



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PATRONS RELATIONS: A SURVIVAL MANUAL

COMPILED BY:
BONNIE L. TURNER
RONDI DOWNS

YAKIMA VALLEY REGIONAL LIBRARY
102 NORTH THIRD STREET
YAKIMA, WA 98901

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INTRODUCTION

All of us as staff members have the responsibility to keep the library as pleasant an environment for the public as possible. This includes discouraging disruptive behavior in the library and coping well with emergencies.

Our efforts to create a comfortable atmosphere sometimes attract people who jeopardize the work we have done. As public servants, we may feel resigned to the opinion that abuse from our public is inescapable and there may seem little we can do about it. Much of this misconception is due to the fact that we are not sure when disruptive behavior becomes antisocial behavior and when antisocial behavior becomes criminal behavior.

This manual discusses the library user's and library employee's rights under the law and how to protect them. It is arranged alphabetically by the type of problem or emergency that may be encountered. The procedure for handling a difficult situation follows a definition of the situation. Some of the procedures in this manual are already being used in various departments. They are compiled here for the benefit of all staff.

We wish to thank the Schenectady County (NY) Public Library, the Eugene (Oregon) Public Library, the Saint Paul (Minnesota) Public Library and Captain Harvey Qualley, Yakima Police Department, whose help and materials were invaluable in compiling this manual.

December 1983

Compiled by:
Bonnie L. Turner
Rondi Downs

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Police - 248-1010 emergency other - 575-6200
Fire - 248-2100 emergency other - 575-6060
Ambulance - Medic I - 248-3610
Crisis Line - 575-4200
Poison Center - 248-4400

Emerge Drug & Alcohol Treatment Service - 24 hrs. - 575-4084 or 575-4200
Yakima Valley Council on Alcoholism - 248-1800 or 248-6800
Yakima Mental Health Center - 575-4084
Yakima Mental Health Services - Open Line - 24 hrs. - 575-4200
Suicide Prevention - 575-4200
Rape Relief - 575-4200
Youth Crisis Hotline - 24 hrs. - 452-LOVE
Crisis Intervention for juveniles over age 13 - 1-800-562-2906
Child Abuse - 575-2342 or Police
YWCA Family Crisis Program - 248-7796
Battered Women - 248-7796
Domestic Violence - 1-800-562-8194 or 6025
Union Gospel Mission (house & feed men) - 248-4510
Yakima County Dept. of Emergency Services - 575-4051
Senior Citizens Hotline - 1-800-562-6028 or 6068
Runaway Hotline - 1-800-621-4000 or 1-800-231-6946
Crisis Residential Center (for runaways) - 453-2103 or 575-2279
Hospitals :
Yakima Valley Memorial - 575-8000
St. Elizabeth Medical Center - 575-5000
New Valley Osteopathic Hospital - 453-6561
Toppenish - Central Memorial - 865-3105
Sunnyside - Sunnyside General - 837-4070
Valley Memorial - 837-2101

COMPLAINTS, ACCIDENTS, EMERGENCIES

SITUATION: CIRCULATION, LIBRARY MATERIALS, SELECTION, POLICIES, QUESTIONS ABOUT

RESPONSE: All library users have a right to question library policies and procedures, as long as this is done in a reasonable way. When such situations arise, staff members should:

1. Remain calm, be receptive and nonjudgmental.
2. Listen carefully to the patron's question or complaint.
3. Pause (take a deep breath) and think before responding.
4. Repeat and rephrase what has been said by the patron.
5. Clearly explain the library's policy and show a written copy of it to the patron if necessary.
6. Follow through with action.
   (see responses to following situations)
7. Try to find alternatives, if possible.
8. If necessary, refer patron to another staff member.
9. If the patron is still not satisfied, refer him/her to the Department Head, Associate Director, or Director.

Circulation Records: Listen and explain policies, taking all necessary steps to insure that the individual's circulation records are accurate. If the patron still has questions or objections, refer him/her to your supervisor.

When requests to see circulation records of other patrons are received, remember that "Information as to patron(s) use of library services shall be considered confidential. At no time may any library employee identify the name(s) of library patrons with specific materials. Should a lawful order or subpoena requesting this information be presented, the Library Director shall immediately consult the library's legal counsel and the President of the Board. These three shall determine what action to take." (Staff Manual)

Library Materials and Selection: If an individual questions the selection of library materials, direct him/her to the reference desk to fill out the form "Citizen's Request for

Reconsideration of Library Materials." This form is kept in the cabinet near the staff copy machine. Reference staff will give the completed form to the Director. Tell the patron he/she will be notified promptly of the results of a complete re-evaluation of the material in question by the Director.

Library Policies: Direct patrons with questions or complaints on library policies, besides materials and selection, to the Director or Associate Director.

SITUATION: FIRE IN THE LIBRARY

RESPONSE:

A. Please study and fix in your mind the location of FIRE EXTINGUISHERS throughout the building. Note especially those that are in the areas where you spend most of your day.

B. Know ALL EXITS. The exits from the work area to the garage have fire doors which automatically drop to close out fire spreading from the garage to the Library or vice versa. Therefore, if a fire is in the garage, you will have to use another exit to leave the building.

C. Memorize the 2 different types of extinguishers and type of fire each is intended for:

I. ■ ABC - Multi-purpose dry chemical for:
A (ordinary combustibles);
B (flammable liquids);
C (electrical equipment).

II. ● CO_2 - Carbon Dioxide for live electrical fires such as in motors, switches, appliances.

These chemicals are intended for immediate application to subdue a fire, but CALL THE FIRE DEPARTMENT IN CASE OF ANY FIRE NO MATTER HOW SMALL.

D. The automatic sprinkler system sets off a fire bell on the south side of the building outside the YOUTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT. It may not be heard throughout the building.

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ANY STAFF MEMBER HEARING THE FIREBELL TO IMMEDIATELY SOUND THE LIBRARY'S GONG CONTINUOUSLY AND CALL THE FIRE DEPARTMENT. The gong is located in the sunken part of the Circulation Desk labeled "CHIME SIGNAL."

E. EMERGENCY SIGNAL - continuous rings on the library's gong.

F. CLEARING THE BUILDING. When the gong sounds continuously go immediately to the nearest exit. Those in the public service areas will make sure the PUBLIC IS CLEARED FROM ALL STACK AND BALCONY AREAS. Those in the basement are to check the STAFF LAVATORIES, the CHILDREN'S LAVATORIES, the PRINT ROOM, the STOREROOM, and the AUDITORIUM and leave by way of the Auditorium Foyer. The Circulation staff will check the ADULT PUBLIC LAVATORIES.

G. Remain calm and think before you act.

SITUATION: INJURY OR SUDDEN ILLNESS OF PATRON

RESPONSE: A. If a patron is injured or becomes ill and requires medical attention, the Librarian-in-charge should call the police and request an ambulance or paramedic team be sent to the library immediately. Library staff should never offer to drive the ill or injured patron anywhere for medical assistance.

B. In all injuries of a serious nature, such as falls, broken limbs, shock, unconsciousness, epileptic attacks, the injured person should not be moved. Wait for the paramedic team. Meanwhile, make the injured patron as comfortable as possible, using a blanket from the staff lounge if necessary.

C. Inform the injured person that emergency help is coming.

D. The Librarian-in-charge or other staff members should clear the area of bystanders; remove any obstacles, i.e. small furniture, book trucks or anything that may be in the path of the emergency assistance crew.

E. Obtain the name, address and telephone number of the injured person and of any witnesses, if appropriate. Also note the names of any staff who were involved or who witnessed the incident.

F. The Librarian-in-charge should complete an incident report form as soon as possible.

G. First Aid Kits are kept in the Sick Room, on the wall near the time clock, at the Circulation Desk, on the Garage Ramp, and in Youth Services.

SITUATION: INJURY OR SUDDEN ILLNESS OF STAFF

RESPONSE:

A. Follow procedures for "Injury or sudden illness of patron" listed above.

B. For accidents to staff, secure insurance report forms from the Business Office.

C. First Aid Kits are kept in the Sick Room, on the wall near the time clock, at the Circulation Desk, on the Garage Ramp, and in Youth Services.

D. File incident report.

SITUATION: POWER FAILURES

RESPONSE:

A. In Daylight

1. The Library will remain open.
2. Open all shades.
3. Clear elevators.
4. Manually charge library materials.
5. For safety of patrons and staff, do not allow the public in dark areas.

B. In Darkness

1. Staff remain on duty in case power is restored and service can be resumed.
2. Clear public from the building and restrict access.
3. Station staff at the door to accept returned items.
4. Know the location of flashlights in your department.

PROBLEMS AND RESPONSES

DEFINITION

Problem behavior is any behavior which either consciously or unconsciously violates or restricts the rights of others to use the library. It is that behavior which disrupts the normal functioning of the library, whether or not that disruption is intentional.

HANDLING PROBLEM PATRONS

Deal with problem patrons in the same manner that you would like to be treated: with courtesy, tact, calmness and most of all common sense. But remember that all problem patrons do not behave in the same way or react to others in the same way. Your approach to the situation depends to a large extent on which type of behavior the problem patron is exhibiting.

Because of the uniqueness of each situation, common sense should play a large part in any encounter with a problem patron. Be careful in approaching a patron who may be potentially violent. Handle problem patrons with the help of other staff members. The following guidelines may help you to cope with a patron when a problem situation arises.

GENERAL ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES

A. If you observe someone causing a disturbance, take the following action:
    1. Approach the individual and explain the library regulation that is being violated.
    2. If necessary, hand the individual the flyer with the library's regulations printed on it. (example p. 29)

B. If you judge a disturbance too serious to handle alone, call for back-up from co-workers and report to the Librarian-in-charge.

C. If an individual does not stop the improper behavior or does not leave the building when instructed, call the police.
    1. Tell the police you are calling from the library.
    2. Give the police your name and department.
    3. Briefly describe the incident and emphasize that help is needed.

D. After you call the police, you or another staff member should notify other public service departments as to the location of the

incident and inform them that the police are coming. Also notify the Associate Director or Director immediately.

E. When the police arrive, the staff member who called the police and those who witnessed the incident should answer any questions for the police.

F. For a serious or dangerous confrontation, do not hesitate to follow through. Any person who witnesses the offense can act as complainant for the library in a criminal prosecution. Once the library builds a reputation for being thorough with offenders, they will stay away.

G. As soon as the incident is over, complete an incident report and file it with the Director's Office. (example p. 31)

PROBLEM: ANGRY OR IRATE PATRONS

RESPONSE: A. Dealing with angry or irate patrons is a problem we all face when working with the public. Follow these techniques when faced with an angry patron:

1. Remain calm. Take a deep breath to relax. Do not give the appearance of being combative or fearful. Show that you care about the patron's problem by eye contact, and by leaning toward the patron.

2. Listen attentively and elicit all information about the complaint.

3. Be aware of how you are speaking. Speak slowly and clearly. Keep your voice low-pitched and quiet.

4. Empathize with the patron and try to understand how he/she feels. If the patron is assured you understand, then there will be no need to express that anger at a higher level. This does not mean you agree with the complaint. This only means that you acknowledge the patron's feelings.

5. Do not react emotionally.

6. Repeat what the patron has said (paraphrase).

7. Ask the patron if your paraphrase was an accurate restatement of what he said.

8. If the patron says your paraphrase was not accurate,

ask him/her to restate the point. Paraphrase until you have done so to the patron's satisfaction.

9. Make your statement only after your paraphrasing has been accepted by the patron.

10. When the patron wants to speak, he/she must accurately paraphrase you and receive your agreement before speaking.

11. Paraphrasing is especially useful during arguments on highly emotional issues when one side tends to prepare a rebuttal while the other side is still speaking. Paraphrasing insures that both sides really listen because each side must be able to restate the other's position. The resulting communication is usually clearer and the relationship between participants is frequently enhanced.

B. When you understand what the problem is, take immediate action:

1. If the patron's complaint is legitimate, do something immediately to alleviate the situation.

2. If the patron's complaint is not legitimate and he/she wants you to alter established policy, be firm. Explain the library's policy. Show the patron a written copy of it if necessary.

3. Do not argue with the patron, simply restate the library's policy. Do not get sidetracked - stick to the subject at hand. Do not get involved in personal issues such as the patron's deadlines, medical/legal problems, etc.

4. While remaining firm, suggest alternatives, without violating policy. This may alleviate the situation.

C. If the patron persists after you have followed these guidelines, refer the patron to your supervisor or to the Librarian-in-charge at that time.

D. If the patron is still not satisfied, call the Associate Director or the Director. If the Associate Director or Director is unavailable (i.e. - during evening or weekend hours), and the situation warrants, call them at home.

E. File incident report.

PROBLEM: ASSAULT, OR PHYSICAL THREATS

RESPONSE:

A. Any staff member who observes an act of assault is responsible for reporting the incident to the police immediately.

B. Act as calmly as possible and do not argue with the assailant.

C. Try to leave the scene and alert other staff members and patrons to move away.

D. If you need assistance in handling a suspected assault or are physically unable to break away, call for help from nearby co-workers or patrons. Another staff member should call the police.

E. Notify the Associate Director or Director immediately.

F. Use common sense techniques that will distract the attacker until the police arrive. While it may be physically impossible for you alone to stop an assault, several people together may be able to defuse the situation. You are legally entitled to use self-defense, or to go to the defense of another person who is being attacked. (RCW 9A.16.020)

G. File incident report.

PROBLEM: BOMB THREAT AND BOMB SEARCH PROCEDURES

RESPONSE: A. If a bomb threat call is received follow these procedures:

1. Keep the caller on the line as long as possible. Ask him to repeat the message. Try to write down every word spoken by the person.

2. If the caller does not indicate the location of the bomb or the time of possible detonation, ASK FOR THIS INFORMATION.

3. Inform the caller that the building is occupied and the detonation of a bomb could result in death or serious injury to many innocent people.

4. Pay particular attention to peculiar background noises such as: motors running, background music, and any other noises which may give a clue as to where the call is being made.

5. Listen closely to the voice (male, female), voice quality (calm, excited), accents and speech impediments.

6. Immediately after the caller hangs up, call the police and notify the Associate Director or Director. Since the police will want to talk first-hand with the person who received the call, remain available until they arrive.

7. Use the intercom to evacuate the building, then use the library's gong in continuous rings as an emergency signal.

8. Clearing the building: when the gong sounds continuously go immediately to the nearest exit. Those in the public service areas will make sure the PUBLIC IS CLEARED FROM ALL STACK AND BALCONY AREAS. Those in the basement are to check the STAFF LAVATORIES, the CHILDREN'S LAVATORIES, the PRINT ROOM, the STOREROOM, and the AUDITORIUM and leave by way of the Auditorium Foyer. The Circulation staff will check the ADULT PUBLIC LAVATORIES.

9. Remain calm and think before you act.

10. The police handle the actual bomb search unless they specifically request us to identify any unusual objects.

11. Staff meet inside the Yakima Mall doors on A Street, across from the Hole-in-One donut shop.

PROBLEM: CHATTY PATRONS

RESPONSE:

A. Chatty patrons are sometimes lonely. Be polite but discourage long, irrelevant conversations. Stick to the subject at hand.

B. If a patron continues a lengthy conversation, politely explain that you must return to work or help another patron.

C. Other staff members should be aware of situations like this and intervene, if necessary, to break up the conversation. Go to the back work area and call the distracted staff member on the intercom line.

D. If a chatty person is bothering other patrons, intervene. Distract the problem patron by asking if you can help.

If he/she refuses your help and persistently bothers other patrons, tactfully tell the patron not to bother other patrons.

PROBLEM: CHILD ABUSE

RESPONSE: A. If a staff member witnesses what appears to be abusive behavior, it should be reported. If you witness a person (parent, teacher with a class, guardian) abusing a child, notify the Child Protective Service, 575-2341, or call the police. You are immune from liability: "Any person participating in good faith in the making of a report pursuant to this chapter...shall in so doing be immune from any liability..." RCW 26.44.060 section (1).

B. After you call the police, notify the Associate Director or Director immediately.

C. File incident report.

PROBLEM: CHILDREN, DISRUPTIVE

RESPONSE: A. Noise:

1. Tell children who become loud or noisy that their behavior is inappropriate in a library and that they are disturbing others.

2. If the noise continues, remind them in a stricter tone of voice. Inform them that they will have to leave the library if they persist.

3. If they persist, tell them to leave the library. Accompany them to the exit if necessary.

B. Children running and playing in the library are hazardous to themselves and others. Stop them and tell them to walk. If they persist, tell them to leave the library.

C. Children should not be allowed to play with or misuse the microfilm readers, reader/printer, microfiche reader, typewriters, photocopy machine, or any other equipment in the library. If they wish to use certain equipment, refer them to the staff member on duty in that department.

D. If parents have accompanied children who become disruptive but fail to correct their behavior, first speak to the

children. If the problem behavior continues, tell the parents that their children are disturbing others. If they do not control their children, tell them that they will have to leave the library.

PROBLEM: CHILDREN - LEFT UNATTENDED OR LOST

RESPONSE:

A. When children become separated from or are left unattended by their parents, they are usually frightened and often are crying. They should be comforted by staff members and their parents located, if possible. When located, tell the parents firmly that the library cannot be used as a temporary baby-sitter and cannot be responsible for their children.

B. If it is determined that the child has been left unattended in the library, question the child as to the location of the parents, their name and time of return. Use the library loudspeaker to see if the parents are in the building. If the parents cannot be reached or the child is too young to know the pertinent information, call the Child Protective Service, 575-2341 or the police. A staff member should remain with the child until authorities arrive.

C. Under no circumstances should a staff member drive the child home.

D. If you call the police, notify the Associate Director or Director immediately.

E. File incident report.

PROBLEM: CONSUMING FOOD OR BEVERAGES IN THE LIBRARY

RESPONSE: If a library patron is consuming food or beverages in the library, explain that it is not allowed. Ask the patron to remove any food or beverage from the library. If the patron does not stop, tell him/her to leave.

PROBLEM: DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR OF PATRONS

RESPONSE:

A. Disruptive behavior by a patron is a problem which is usually not of a threatening nature but nonetheless is disturbing.

B. Approach the patron who purposefully or unintentionally

disrupts other library users or staff members. Explain that the behavior is inappropriate in the library. Tell the patron to stop at once.

C. If the patron continues, tell your supervisor or the Librarian-in-charge. They will tell the individual to stop the behavior or leave the library.

D. If the patron still continues to act disruptively and refuses to leave, the Librarian-in-charge will call the police.

E. If police are called, notify the Associate Director or Director immediately.

F. File incident report, if police are called.

G. Be alert to signs that a patron is being disruptive, as other patrons are not always quick to report a problem. These signs include:

1. Patrons moving away from another patron.
2. Patrons staring at another patron.
3. Patrons looking at staff members as a form of complaint.

PROBLEM: DRUGS

RESPONSE:

A. It is not always obvious whether a person who is acting strangely is under the influence of drugs or suffering from a psychological problem. Someone behaving in a particularly bizarre fashion might be assumed to be under the influence of drugs, because people with psychological disorders of such an extreme nature are probably not out on the streets.

B. Do not make the patron feel threatened, as this will only make the situation worse. Be sure to stay away from the person and do not touch him/her.

C. If the problem is not too severe, but the patron is disturbing others, ask him/her to leave the library.

D. If the individual will not leave or you need assistance in dealing with him/her, call your supervisor or the Librarian-in-charge.

E. The supervisor will ask the individual to leave the library, stating that if they do not leave, the police will be called.

F. If the patron persists and will not leave, call the police. If the patron is abusive or threatening, be sure to tell the police and emphasize that assistance is needed immediately.

G. If the police are called, notify the Associate Director or Director immediately.

H. File incident report.

I. If you or a patron witness the use or sale of illegal drugs notify the Librarian-in-charge. However, only the person who actually witnessed the incident can legally press charges for the sale of illegal drugs. The police though, can arrest the offender and charge them with possession.

PROBLEM: DRUNKS

RESPONSE:

A. Anyone openly carrying an alcoholic beverage in the library and drinking from it should be considered a problem patron.

B. Exercise judgment in the case of people who smell of alcohol. If the patron's behavior is not otherwise offensive, then there is no problem. But if the patron is loud, obnoxious, or if other patrons are complaining, take action.

C. Drunks are potentially dangerous and should be approached with caution. Although they may appear calm, any words or actions could turn them violent.

D. Before approaching a drunk, get back-up support from co-workers. Then tell the patron to leave the library. State that disruptive behavior and/or drinking are not allowed in a public library.

E. If the patron refuses to leave, is incapable of leaving, or you feel is too dangerous to deal with, call the police. Do not jeopardize yourself or others by physically touching or assisting the person. Wait for the police.

F. If the police are called, notify the Associate Director or Director immediately.

G. File incident report.

PROBLEM: ECCENTRIC BEHAVIOR/SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR

RESPONSE: Some library users may act strangely, but they do not disturb other library users and they use the library in an appropriate way. Do not consider these people problem patrons. If there is any question about their behavior, consult with your supervisor to determine what action, if any, should be taken.

PROBLEM: EMOTIONALLY/MENTALLY DISTURBED PATRONS

RESPONSE:

A. The emotionally/mentally disturbed patron has the same right to use the library as any other patron. Dealing with a person who acts or talks irrationally can be difficult. But if the individual is not dangerous or is not disturbing others, do not consider their behavior a problem.

B. If the patron is disturbing others, be firm, consistent and speak in a commanding voice when talking. Explain that their behavior is disturbing to others and must be stopped.

C. Do not corner or touch the person. Allow the individual space so that he/she does not feel threatened and can leave the building easily.

D. Do not try to argue the patron out of hallucinations or delusions. Also do not laugh at the person's remarks or problems. Simply restate your message that disruptive behavior is not allowed in the library. Sometimes a firm stand forces a disturbed person to face the reality of the situation.

E. If the disturbance continues, firmly tell the patron to leave the library.

F. If you have difficulty dealing with an individual, call for help from co-workers or the Librarian-in-charge.

G. If the individual refuses to stop or to leave the library or, is physically threatening to himself/herself, other patrons or staff, call the police immediately.

H. If the police are called, notify the Associate Director or Director immediately.

I. File incident report.

PROBLEM: FEET - BARE, OR PLACED ON TABLES

RESPONSE: Patrons with bare feet are not permitted in the building. Placing of feet on tables and chairs is also prohibited. If these incidents occur, remind the patron of the library regulations. If the patron does not comply, tell him/her to leave.

PROBLEM: PANHANDLERS OR SOLICITORS

RESPONSE:

A. Panhandling and soliciting are strictly prohibited on the library premises.
B. Children are not allowed to sell raffle tickets, candy, etc., in the library.
C. If you witness a violation of this regulation, explain the library's policy.
D. Ask if you can help the individual find library materials. If the individual does not want any help, tell the person that he/she is not using the library for appropriate purposes and must leave.
E. If the patron persists, notify your supervisor or the Librarian-in-charge. They will tell the individual to stop or the police will be called. If the individual continues, call the police.
F. If the police are called, notify the Associate Director or Director immediately.
G. File incident report.

PROBLEM: PETITIONS

RESPONSE: Circulating petitions among library patrons and staff by any group or individual is not allowed in the library. If you witness a violation of this, explain the library's policy to the patron. Ask them to stop.

PROBLEM: PETS

RESPONSE: Pets of any kind or size are not allowed in the library. Seeing Eye dogs are legally exempt from this regulation. If you witness a violation of this, explain the library's policy to the patron. Tell them to take their pet outside.

PROBLEM: PURSE SNATCHERS

RESPONSE: A. For staff: in the building, keep your purse locked up and out of sight at all times. If a suspected purse snatcher is in the building, set up an informal alert by calling other departments.

B. If a library user reports a purse missing or stolen:

1. Ask the person if the bag could have been misplaced somewhere else or left in the car. If not, suggest the person retrace her steps while in the building.

2. If the purse is not found, call the police. In the meantime, search the building, including the restrooms (both men's and women's) and especially the wastepaper containers. Also check outside the building among the shrubbery, in case it was tossed there.

3. File a police report with the patron.

4. Take the name, address and telephone number of the patron and give it to the circulation desk in case the purse is later located.

C. If the police are called, notify the Associate Director or Director immediately.

D. File incident report.

E. If patrons ask you to watch their purses or other belongings, refuse. Tell them you cannot be responsible for their property.

PROBLEM: SEXUAL DEVIANTS: GIRL/BOY WATCHERS, FLASHERS, ETC.

RESPONSE: A. Girl/boy watchers, peekers, etc.

1. If someone is suspiciously watching or following a patron or a staff member, try to get a description. Note height, coloring, age, general build and what the person is wearing. Anything you can remember may be helpful.

2. Although the offender may be gone by the time you report it, it is a good practice to tell fellow staff members what the offender looks like so they can be aware. Tell your supervisor what has occurred.

3. Many times if you confront the individual and let

him/her know that he/she is being watched, it will stop him/her. To confront him/her, simply ask, "Are you finding the library materials you need", or other statements to that effect.

4. If the patron persists, the Librarian-in-charge will warn the offender, if located, that the behavior is offensive, against the law and if not stopped, the police will be called.

5. If the patron persists, call the police.

6. If the police are called, notify the Associate Director or Director immediately.

7. File incident report.

B. Flashers: these people are generally passive, not violent.

1. If this happens to a staff member:

a. Remain calm and do not show shock or alarm at the behavior as these people thrive on your reaction.

b. Try to remember and write down as much of a description of the offender as possible. Note age, general build and height, coloring, clothing, etc. If the patron leaves try to get a description or license number of his/her vehicle and/or direction of travel.

c. Immediately alert other staff members including your supervisor or the Librarian-in-charge.

d. Call the police and give them a description and location of the incident.

e. After you call the police, notify the Associate Director or Director immediately.

f. If the offender is still around, the staff member who witnessed the incident should identify the person to the police and have him/her arrested. (The staff member does not have to have the offender arrested but should be encouraged to. This is a serious problem and should not be taken lightly.)

g. File incident report.

2. If this happens to a patron:

a. Help the patron calm down. If necessary, take the patron downstairs to our staff room to provide some privacy for the patron.

b. Determine if a physical attack has taken place.

c. Obtain a general description and location of the incident.

d. Call the police with this information.

e. If the offender is still around, the patron should be encouraged to have him/her arrested, but do not force this on the patron.

f. Offer the patron whatever additional help may be necessary. Make sure the patron has regained self-possession before leaving. In the case of children, offer to call their parents, etc.

g. After you call the police, notify the Associate Director or Director immediately.

h. File incident report.

PROBLEM: SLEEPING PATRONS

RESPONSE:

A. Sleeping is not allowed in the library. Library users who simply doze off for a short period may be left alone. The library's regulation pertains to habitual sleepers or those who are noisy, sprawled out on the furniture, or generally disturbing to other patrons.

B. Discretion should be used in approaching sleeping patrons. Do not physically touch or shake them. They may possibly swing out at you as you awaken them. Be sure to approach them from the front and at an arm's distance.

C. Tell the patron to remain awake.

D. Check back after approximately ten minutes. If the patron is still sleeping, wake him/her up and tell them to leave the building.

E. If the sleeping patron is drunk, will not leave, or is physically threatening, call the police.

F. If the police are called, notify the Associate Director or Director immediately.

G. File incident report.

PROBLEM: SMOKERS

RESPONSE: According to the Washington Administrative Code: 248-152-010-030, it is unlawful for any person to smoke tobacco in indoor facilities used by and open to the general public such as the library. If you see an individual smoking, ask the offender to stop at once or leave the library. The only place smoking is allowed is in the foyer of the library.

PROBLEM: TEENAGE GANGS, ROWDY BEHAVIOR

RESPONSE:

A. Approach the members of the group and ask them calmly, but firmly to stop the disruptive behavior. Do not show fear or be intimidated or sidetracked. Talk to them and infer they are adults and should act as such. Never physically touch them.

B. If the group continues to be rowdy, give them a second warning. Call for reinforcements from co-workers in issuing the warning, if necessary.

C. If the group ignores the previous warnings, tell them to leave immediately. If they refuse, call the police.

D. Chronic teenage offenders should be reported to the police by the Librarian-in-charge and barred from entering the library.

E. If the police are called, notify the Associate Director or Director immediately.

F. File incident report.

PROBLEM: TELEPHONE CALLS - ANNOYING, OBSCENE, THREATENING

RESPONSE:

A. Obscene calls:

1. Quickly press down and let up on the button and say "Operator, I would like you to trace this call." The caller will probably hang up on you.

2. Hang up the telephone immediately.
3. If the calls persist:
   a. Notify your supervisor.
   b. Call the police.
   c. Notify the Associate Director or Director immediately.
   d. Inform the telephone company business office: 1-838-6636.
   e. File incident report.

B. Threatening calls:
1. Hang up.
2. Call the police immediately.
3. Notify the Associate Director or Director.
4. File incident report.

"It is a crime under both Washington State and Federal Law for anyone to make a telephone call of an obscene, anonymous or threatening nature to any person with intent to harass such person, or for anyone knowingly to permit any telephone under his or her control to be used for such purposes." Yakima telephone book

PROBLEM: THEFT OF LIBRARY MATERIALS OR PROPERTY

RESPONSE: A. Unauthorized removal, or attempted removal, of library materials is, in legal terms, larceny. To establish that a larceny has been committed, the library must prove beyond any reasonable doubt that two elements were present at the time of apprehension:

1. The taking away and current possession of property of value by the suspect.
2. The intent to steal.

When these two elements are clearly present, apprehension, detention and arrest are appropriate.

B. If a library patron is attempting to leave the library with materials which have not been properly checked out, do not assume that theft was the intent. Absentmindedness, misunderstanding of procedures, etc., are all possible causes.

C. Approach the patron pleasantly and ask if you can help them to check out the library materials.

D. The most common way of proving intent to steal is by showing that the suspect concealed the item. To prove intent to steal by concealment, the item must be carried in a place or manner in which it would not ordinarily be carried. Because an item is not visible to the eye does not legally mean that it has been concealed. A patron attempting to exit the library with a briefcase containing materials which have not been checked out, has not illegally concealed the materials since that is where books might normally be carried. The patron could claim that the books were inadvertently picked up with other materials.

E. But if a patron is attempting to exit the library with materials under his/her clothing or covertly wrapped in something, concealment can be used to prove intent to steal since library materials are not usually carried in this manner.

F. If you determine that a patron has willfully tried to violate the law and both "possession" and "intent to steal" seem clearly evident or provable, tell the suspect that unless he/she surrenders the concealed library property, the police will be called.

G. If the material is not handed over, have a co-worker call the police while you remain with the suspect.

H. If the suspect tries to leave, do not risk personal injury by attempting to physically detain him/her. Many times, however, an authoritarian tone of voice and manner may convince the person to remain or to hand over the library materials.

I. If the patron leaves before the police arrive, give them his/her name, if known, physical description and if possible a description of the vehicle and/or direction of travel.

J. If the police are called, notify the Associate Director or Director immediately.

K. File incident report.

PROBLEM: TRIGGERED ALARM, BOOK DETECTION SYSTEM

RESPONSE: A. If the alarm of the book detection system is triggered by a patron leaving the library, the Circulation staff legally has "reasonable" cause to detain the patron. Follow the procedures below:

1. Politely ask the patron to step back in order to check any library materials that might not have been charged out. If the person has already checked out materials, they should be desensitized again.

2. Request the patron go through the gate again. If the alarm continues to go off, ask the patron to step back once more. Inquire whether the patron has any metal objects or other library materials that were not charged out. Take the checked out materials and pass them around the gate.

3. Ask the patron to proceed through the gate. If the alarm still rings, the patron must step back. At this point, ask to see the inside of the patron's briefcase, coat, jacket or pocketbook. Never physically frisk the individual. If the patron is upset or angry, explain tactfully the library's policy. If necessary, ask for help from co-workers.

4. If it is obvious the patron has no other materials or you cannot locate any concealed materials, let the patron go through the entrance gate and apologize for the inconvenience. The alarm does sometimes go off for various reasons such as the weather.

5. If you find concealed materials, follow the procedures listed under THEFT OF LIBRARY MATERIALS OR PROPERTY.

6. If a patron is trying to remove Reference materials, explain that these never leave the library. Suggest that the patron check with the Reference staff who will see if there are circulating copies. Remind the patron that there is a photocopy machine available to reproduce information needed from these sources.

7. If the patron is trying to remove circulating materials that have not been checked out, tell him/her that a record must be kept of all circulating materials that leave the library. Explain that a library card is required to check out library materials. If the patron has a valid library card then the materials can be checked out.

8. If the patron does not have a library card, explain the method for getting a card. If the person qualifies and is willing to fill out the application to obtain a card, issue him/her a card. Then allow the patron to check out the materials.

B. If the police are called notify the Associate Director or Director immediately.

C. File incident report.

PROBLEM: VANDALS AND DESTRUCTIVE PATRONS

RESPONSE: A. The library staff has a right and duty to protect public property. According to the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 27.12 330, "Whoever intentionally injures, defaces, or destroys any property belonging to or deposited in any public library, reading room, or other educational institution, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor." See also the section on Malicious Mischief in RCW 9A.48.070-100. Examples of destructive behavior by patrons include:

1. Destroying or defacing library materials, including slicing or tearing pages from books, periodicals or newspapers or writing in same.

2. Vandalism of library property including defacing walls and furniture, damaging facilities (such as restrooms), writing on table and desk surfaces, on upholstered chairs, sofas and cushions, breaking windows, records, etc.

B. Destructive patrons can be careless or thoughtless; others can be dangerous. You must size up the situation and decide the best method of handling it.

C. If you receive a report or observe someone defacing library

property, and the patron seems nonviolent, tell him/her that the actions in question are against the law and must stop at once.

D. If you receive a report or observe a patron maliciously destroying library property, and he/she is obviously not approachable, call the police immediately.

E. If you determine that a patron has vandalized library property, call the police.

F. The library will prosecute anyone who vandalizes or maliciously destroys library property. But arrest power can only be exercised when the vandalism is committed in the presence of the person signing the citation or making the arrest.

G. If the police are called, notify the Associate Director or Director, immediately.

H. File incident report.

PROBLEM: VERBAL ABUSE OF STAFF

RESPONSE:

A. If a library user speaks to you in an abusive or obscene manner, try to remain calm. Remember that it is not directed at you personally.

B. You do not have to listen to obscene language. Interrupt and tell the patron his/her language and behavior are not appropriate in a public library and are causing a disturbance.

C. If the patron continues to be abusive, do not argue. Tell the person that he/she must leave the library or the police will be called.

D. If the patron refuses to leave, call the police.

E. Notify the Associate Director or Director immediately.

F. Other staff members should come to the support of the staff member being abused. The Librarian-in-charge should intervene to try and defuse the situation.

G. File incident report.

(See also ANGRY OR IRATE PATRONS; DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR)

PROBLEM: WEAPONS

RESPONSE:

A. It is unlawful to carry, display or draw a dangerous weapon (firearm, dagger, sword, knife, club, etc.) in a manner and place that intimidates another or that warrants alarm for the safety of other persons.

B. A knife worn on a patron's belt will be allowed in the library as long as it remains sheathed. However, a knife held in a threatening manner or any gun in the library will not be allowed.

C. If anyone enters the library with a weapon other than a sheathed knife, call the police immediately.

D. Before the police arrive, the staff is responsible for protecting other patrons in the building. Remain calm. Quietly and quickly move other patrons away from the offender - through the stacks or the Youth Services area to the employee work area, if necessary.

E. DO NOT approach the offender. Stay as far away as possible.

F. After you call the police, notify the Associate Director or Director.

G. File incident report.

APPENDIX A: LEGAL CONSEQUENCES

Examples of problem behavior from Revised Code of Washington which necessitate immediate police action.

Offense	Intent or Result
Assault (9A.36.020-050)	Intentionally or by reckless conduct causes injury to another person.
Criminal Trespass (9A.52.080)	Knowingly enters or remains unlawfully* in or upon premises.
Disorderly Conduct (9A.84.030)	Uses abusive language; disrupts lawful assembly; obstructs traffic.
Malicious Mischief (9A.48.070-090)	Intentionally causes physical damage to the property of another.
Public Indecency (9A.88.010)	Intentionally makes any open and obscene exposure of his person that causes affront or alarm.
Theft (9A.56.020-050)	Wrongfully obtain property or services of another.
Weapons (9.41.230 & 270)	Unlawful to carry, display, draw dangerous weapon.

*Unlawfully remains - A person who, regardless of his intent, enters or remains in or upon a premises which are at the time open to the public does so with license and privilege, UNLESS HE DEFIES A LAWFUL ORDER NOT TO ENTER OR REMAIN, PERSONALLY COMMUNICATED TO HIM BY THE OWNER OF SUCH PREMISES OR OTHER AUTHORIZED PERSON.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE FORMS

YAKIMA VALLEY REGIONAL LIBRARY

R U L E S
GOVERNING THE USE
OF THE LIBRARY

While in the building, please do not

- SMOKE
- CONSUME FOOD OR BEVERAGES
- LOITER
- SOLICIT
- SLEEP
- BRING PETS INTO THE BUILDING,
  EXCEPT SEEING EYE DOGS
- HARASS PATRONS OR LIBRARY PERSONNEL
- BE DRUNK OR DISORDERLY
- LEAVE CHILDREN UNATTENDED
- ENTER WITH BARE FEET
- PLACE FEET ON TABLES OR CHAIRS

The violation of any one of these rules may subject the individual(s) involved to exclusion from the library premises.

CITIZEN'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIAL

Author_____ Hardcover___ Paperback___ Other___

Title_____

Publisher (if known)_____

Request initiated by_____

Phone_____ Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip Code_____

Complainant represents:

Himself_____

Organization_____

or a group_____

(If objection is to material other than a book, change wording of the following questions so that they apply.)

1. To what in the book do you object: (Moral, or political objections? Please be specific; cite pages.)

_____

_____

_____

2. Where did you hear about this book?_____

_____

3. What do you feel might be the result of reading this book?_____

_____

4. For what age group would you find this book suitable?_____

5. Is there anything good about the book? (Please be specific.)_____

_____

6. Did you read the entire book?_____ What parts?_____

_____

7. Are you aware of the judgment of this book by literary critics?_____

8. What do you believe is the theme of this book?_____

_____

9. What would you like your library to do about this book?

Do not lend it to my child_____

Withdraw it from all readers_____

Send it back to the staff selection committee for re-evaluation___

10. In its place, what book of equal literary quality would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of the subject treated?

_____

Signature of Complainant

YAKIMA VALLEY REGIONAL LIBRARY

Date_____

YAKIMA VALLEY REGIONAL LIBRARY

INCIDENT REPORT

To Report:
(check one) ____Disturbance
____Emergency/Accident
____Injury/Illness
____Vandalism
____Theft
____Damage
____Other (explain)

Date:

Time of Day:

Name of Library User: (if applicable)
Address
Telephone
General description
(height/weight, sex, age, race, clothing)

Whom Notified:

Description of Incident:

Contributory Causes:

People Involved/Witnesses
Address
Telephone Willing to Testify?

Action Taken:

Call to police, fire department, emergency ambulance, or other. (explain "other")
Time call made:
Time emergency personnel arrived:
Officer's name:
First aid given:
Other solution:

Additional Comments:

_____
Signature of staff member handling incident

If patron refuses help for injury or illness, please have him sign below

_____
Patron's Signature

File Report in Director's Office

APPENDIX C: HELPFUL HINTS ON HOW TO DEAL WITH PROBLEM PATRONS

Incidents which involve problem patrons are among the most difficult situations library staff members face. Problem patrons are often skillful manipulators who know how to use a staff member's feelings of doubt, guilt, pity, embarrassment and fear to their best advantage. In all dealings with patrons who are causing trouble, it is important to assess the seriousness of the situation as early in the confrontation as possible.

The following general suggestions might be helpful in dealing with problem patrons:

1. Listen carefully and assess the situation. Problem patrons often provide clues about their motivation and likely course of behavior. Take the time to evaluate the situation before acting.

2. Maintain a calm, friendly, nonjudgmental attitude. Staying calm will often help to defuse an unpleasant situation and will enable you to exercise better judgment.

3. Avoid a loud tone of voice or use of phrases that might be considered moralizing or condescending.

4. Use common sense in dealing with problem patrons.

5. When you understand what the problem is, take immediate action.

6. Explain your position in firm, unambiguous language. It is important to convince problem causers that you are in charge. Do not become involved in bargaining or argument - this may escalate a confrontation.

7. Do not allow yourself to be sidetracked by the patron. Simply repeat the library's position firmly, as often as necessary.

8. Suggest suitable, realistic alternatives.

9. State sanctions. Let the patron know what will happen if problem behavior does not stop. (e.g. "You will have to leave the library," "I will call the police")

10. Be alert to signs that a patron is being disruptive, as other patrons are not always quick to report a problem. These signs include:

    a. Patrons moving away from another patron.

    b. Patrons staring at another patron.

    c. Patrons looking at staff members as a form of complaint.

11. Use teamwork. Call on other staff members as necessary.

12. If the patron wishes to see someone "high up," explain the situation concisely to the supervisor in realistic terms and in a calm manner.

13. Call outside help if necessary. Be aware of which agencies should be called upon for particular problems.

SEE USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS - page 2

14. If the patron appears to be dangerous, call the police. Then ask other patrons to move away from the disturbed patron for their safety. All staff should also move away. Do not attempt to stop the patron if he/she decides to leave the library.

15. If the police are called, notify the Associate Director or Director.

16. File incident report.

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